

REMARKS

This is a full and timely response to the outstanding non-final Office Action mailed November 16, 2004. Claims 1 – 22 remain pending. Reconsideration and allowance of the application and presently pending claims are respectfully requested.

Election/Restriction Requirement

The Office Action indicates that a provisional election was made without traverse to prosecute the invention of the embodiment of FIG. 5B. Applicant affirms this election and has annotated the appropriate claims as being withdrawn.

Rejections under 35 U.S.C. 102

The Office Action indicates that claims 1 - 6, 10, 13 – 15, 19 and 22 are rejected under 35 U.S.C 102 as being anticipated by *Bonora*. Applicant respectfully traverses the rejection.

As will be described in greater detail below, the robot of Applicant's claims is movably disposed on the path. However, the lift/elevator system (60) of *Bonora* is positioned under the conveyor system (14), as described at col. 7 lines 36-39. Additionally, *Bonora's* elevator system does not move along the path (72), as shown in Figs. 5 and 8. Therefore, Applicant respectfully asserts that the pending claims patentably define over *Bonora*. Applicant also respectfully notes that the lift/elevator system (60) of *Bonora* can be a hoist-type lift system, as described at col. 7 lines 43-45, which is the conventional lifting mechanism disclosed in the present application.

With respect to claim 1, that claim recites:

1. A load port transfer device, for delivering a wafer carrier along an overhead conveying system, including:
 - a load port;
 - a path, having vertical and horizontal components***, the vertical component having a top portion connected to the horizontal component beside the overhead conveying system and a bottom portion extending from the load port; and
 - a robot, movably disposed on the path to transfer the wafer carrier between the load port and the overhead conveying system.***

(Emphasis Added).

Applicant respectfully asserts that the cited art is deficient for the purpose of anticipating claim 1. In particular, Applicant respectfully asserts that that cited art does not teach or otherwise disclose at least the limitations emphasized above in claim 1. Specifically, the load port transfer device (20) of claim 1 includes a load port (21), a path (22), and a robot (23). The path (22) has vertical and horizontal components (221, 222), such as shown in Fig. 4. The vertical component (221) has a top portion (40) connected to the horizontal component (222) beside the overhead conveying system (26) and a bottom portion (41) extending from the load port (21). The robot (23) is movably disposed on the path (22) to transfer the wafer carrier (25) between the load port (21) and the overhead conveying system (26). Furthermore, the vertical component (221) has a top portion (40) connected to the horizontal component (222) beside the overhead conveying system (26) and a bottom portion (41) extending from the load port (21).

The Office Action contends that, according to column 4 lines 38–40 of *Bonora*, “the bottom portion (41) of the vertical component (221) extending from the load port (21),” is disclosed. However, Applicant can locate no such teaching. Thus, clarification is respectfully requested. Moreover, Applicant’s path comprising the horizontal and vertical component is

patentably distinct from the rail (72) of *Bonora*, such as shown in Fig. 8. However, even if the rail of *Bonora* is attributable to Applicant's path, *Bonora* does not teach or otherwise disclose that the rail (72) extends from the load port (120), as recited in claim 1. Therefore Applicant respectfully asserts that claim 1 is in condition for allowance.

Since claims 2 - 6 and 10 are dependent claims that incorporate the limitations of claim 1, Applicant respectfully asserts that these claims also are in condition for allowance. Additionally, these claims recite other limitations that can serve as an independent basis for patentability.

With respect to claim 13, that claim recites:

13. A load port transfer device, for delivering a wafer carrier to a conveying system, comprising:
 - a load port;
 - a path, having vertical and horizontal components***, the vertical component having a top portion beside the conveying system and a bottom portion, extending from the load port; and
 - a robot, including a moving mechanism movably disposed on the path to transfer the wafer carrier between the load port and the conveying system***, and a holding mechanism having a first end holding the wafer carrier and a second end disposed on the moving mechanism.

(Emphasis Added).

Applicant respectfully asserts that the cited art is deficient for the purpose of anticipating claim 13. In particular, Applicant respectfully asserts that that cited art does not teach or otherwise disclose at least the limitations emphasized above in claim 13. Therefore Applicant respectfully asserts that claim 13 is in condition for allowance. Since claims 14, 15 and 19 are dependent claims that incorporate the limitations of claim 13, Applicant respectfully asserts that these claims also are in condition for allowance. Additionally, these claims recite other limitations that can serve as an independent basis for patentability.

With respect to claim 22, that claim recites:

22. An intra-bay delivery system comprising:
a wafer carrier;
a load port supporting the wafer carrier;
a conveyor, disposed above the load port;
a rail having vertical and horizontal components, wherein the vertical component extends from the load port and the horizontal component is located above the conveyor; and
a robot including a roller movably disposed on the rail to transfer the wafer carrier between the load port and the conveyor and a holding portion having a first end holding the wafer carrier and a second end disposed on the roller, wherein the first end holding the wafer carrier is a flange.

(Emphasis Added).

Applicant respectfully asserts that the cited art is deficient for the purpose of anticipating claim 22. In particular, Applicant respectfully asserts that that cited art does not teach or otherwise disclose at least the limitations emphasized above in claim 22. Therefore Applicant respectfully asserts that claim 22 is in condition for allowance.

Cited Art of Record

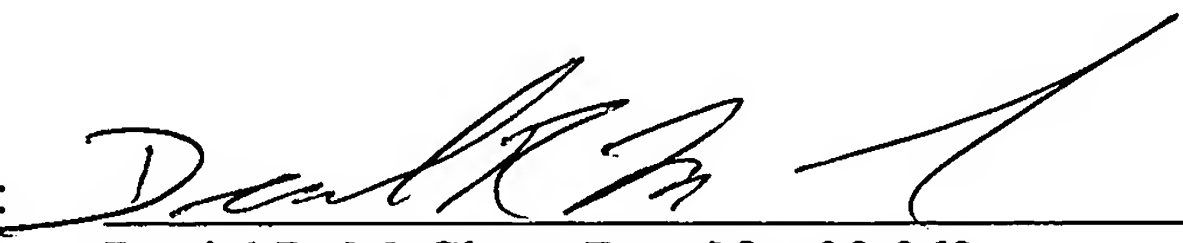
The cited art of record has been considered, but is not believed to affect the patentability of the presently pending claims.

CONCLUSION

In light of the foregoing amendments and for at least the reasons set forth above, Applicant respectfully submits that all objections and/or rejections have been traversed, rendered moot, and/or accommodated, and that the pending claims are in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration and allowance of the present application and all pending claims are hereby courteously requested. If, in the opinion of the Examiner, a telephonic conference would expedite the examination of this matter, the Examiner is invited to call the undersigned attorney at (770) 933-9500.

No fee is believed to be due in connection with this Amendment and Response. If, however, any fee is believed to be due, you are hereby authorized to charge any such fee to deposit account No. 20-0778.

Respectfully submitted,

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